CLAIMS:

1. A method of measuring and analysing multiple data sources over a communications network in order to ascertain information about the use of one or more resources linked to said communications network, said method comprising the steps of:

obtaining a data source for a first group of one or more monitored resources, said first group linked to said communications network;

obtaining a further data source for a second group of one or more monitored resources or a group of monitored users, each of said second group and said group of monitored users linked to said communications network and

combining said data source and said further data source to form a single data source available to interested parties so as to ascertain usage information on one or more resources.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said combining step includes one or more of displaying, aggregating, transforming, calibrating or formatting said single data source via a reporting server means through said communications network.

3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 such that when said further data source is obtained with respect to said group of monitored users, the method further comprises the step of initially forming said group of monitored users as a sample group so as to record and measure interactions of users in said sample group.

4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the interactions of the users in the sample group are entered by the users in a user interface means.

5. A method according to claim 3 or claim 4 wherein the further data source is based on said interactions in relation to one or more monitored resources and/or one or more unmonitored resources.

6. A method according to any one of claims 1, 2 or 5 further comprising the step of processing said data source and said further data source.

7. A method according to claim 6, when appended to claim 5, wherein the processing of said further data source is in relation to the interactions of the users in said sample group and further comprises calibrating a value based on said data source and said further data source.

8. A method according to claim 7 wherein said calibrating step comprises calculating an error rate.

9. A method according to claim 8 further comprising the step of applying the error rate to the further data source of one or more unmonitored resources so as to determine an estimate of equivalent interactions of total users with respect to the one or more unmonitored resources.

10. A method according to any one of the previous claims wherein the step of obtaining said data source uses measurement code means from said first group to obtain measurements of said interactions of all users of said first group of one or more monitored resources.

11. A method according to claim 3 wherein the step of obtaining said further data source uses measurement code means forwarded to each user interface means of users in said sample group so as to record all interactions of each user in the sample group.

12. A method according to claim 9 further comprising the step of calculating a weighting factor based on the number of users in said sample group and the total number of users expected to have access to one or more resources available through said communications network.

13. A method according to claim 12 further comprising the step of multiplying said weighting factor with the number of users in said sample group that have interactions recorded in relation to said first group of one or more monitored resources to obtain a first figure for the expected number from all users to have interactions with said first group.

14. A method according to claim 13 further comprising the step of multiplying said weighting factor with the number of users in said sample group that have corresponding interactions recorded in relation to said one or more unmonitored resources to obtain a second figure for the expected number from all users to have recorded interactions of the one or more unmonitored resources.

15. A method according to claim 14 wherein the error rate is calculated by dividing the number of actual interactions in said data source, pertaining to the one or more monitored resources in said first group, by said first figure.

16. A method according to claim 15 wherein the calculated error rate is multiplied by said second figure to obtain the expected number of total users to have interactions in relation to said one or more unmonitored resources.

17. A system for measuring and analysing multiple data sources over a communications network in order to ascertain information about the use of one or more resources linked to said communications network, said system comprising:

a first group of one or more monitored resources, comprising resource servers;

a second group of one or more monitored resources, comprising resource servers,

a data collection and processing means for receiving a data source for said first group of one or more monitored resources, and for receiving a further data source for said second group of one or more monitored resources;

reporting means for displaying said data source and said further data source as a combined data source to interested parties so as to ascertain usage information on one or more resources.

18. A system for measuring and analysing multiple data sources over a communications network in order to ascertain information about the use of one or more resources linked to said communications network, said system comprising:

a first group of one or more monitored resources, comprising resource servers;

a second group of one or more monitored users;

a data collection and processing means for receiving a data source for said first group of one or more monitored resources, and for receiving a further data source for said second group of one or more monitored users;

reporting means for displaying said data source and said further data source as a combined data source to interested parties so as to ascertain usage information on one or more resources.

19. A system according to claim 17 or claim 18 wherein said reporting means is a reporting server means included in said data collection and processing means.

20. A system according to any one of claims 17 to 19 wherein said data collection and processing means includes collection server means for collecting said data source and said further data source and further includes processing means for processing the data source and further data source collected by the collection server means.

21. A system according to claim 18 wherein in relation to said further data source for said second group of monitored users, interactions and resource requests of each of the monitored users, entered on respective user interface means, are measured and recorded and sent to collection server means in said data collection and processing means.

22. A system according to claim 21 wherein the further data source is based on interactions from said monitored users in relation to one or more monitored resources and/or one or more unmonitored resources.

23. A system according to claim 22 wherein said further data source and said data source collected by said collection server means are processed by processing server means in said data collection and processing means to calibrate a value based on said data source and said further data source.

24. A system according to claim 23 wherein the calibrated value is an error rate which is subsequently applied to the further data source of one or more unmonitored resources so as to determine an estimate of equivalent interactions of total users with respect to the one or more unmonitored resources.

25. A system according to claim 24 wherein said processing server means calculates a weighting factor based on the number of users in the second group of one or more monitored users and the total number of users expected to have access to one or more resources available through said communications network.

26. A system according to claim 25 wherein said processing server means multiplies said weighting factor with the number of users in said second group of one or more monitored users that have interactions recorded in relation to said first group of one or more monitored resources to obtain a first figure for the expected number from all users to have interactions with said first group.

27. A system according to claim 26 wherein said processing server means multiplies said weighting factor with the number of users in said group of monitored users that have corresponding interactions recorded in relation to said one or more unmonitored resources to obtain a second figure for the expected number from all users to have recorded interactions of the one or more unmonitored resources.

28. A system according to claim 27 wherein the error rate is calculated by dividing the number of actual interactions in said data source, pertaining to the one or more monitored resources in said first group, by said first figure.

29. A system according to claim 28 wherein the calculated error rate is multiplied by said second figure to obtain an expected number of total users to have interactions in relation to said one or more unmonitored resources.

30. A system according to claim 29 wherein said reporting server means displays said expected number of total users having interactions associated with said one or more unmonitored resources.

31. A system according to any one of claims 17 to 30 wherein said communications network is the Internet.

32. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 16 wherein said communications network is the Internet.

33. A system according to claim 21 wherein all requests for resources from the monitored users is done through a proxy server.

34. A system according to claim 33 wherein measurement code is inserted by said proxy server into one or more requested resources and then forwarded with the requested resource to the respective monitored user.

35. A system according to claim 34 wherein the proxy server is part of the data collection and processing means.

36. A system according to claim 17 wherein an insertion server means is used to insert measurement code into each resource requested by a user.

37. A method of enabling research in a communications network having at least one user computer with an internet browser, the method comprising the step of:
altering a proxy setting of the browser of the user's computer to divert the user computer's internet access through a proxy server.

38. The method of claim 37 further comprising the step of upon receiving an internet resource requested by the user from a visited internet site, inserting measurement code into the resource requested and passing the resource to the user's browser to monitor the usage of the resource.

39. The method of claim 38 further comprising the step of passing measurement data, which includes user identification data, from the user's browser to a data collection and processing means.

40. A network enabling internet access by a user computer, characterised in that a connection means on the user computer may be set to enable connection between a proxy server and the user computer such that the proxy server is communicably coupled between the connection means on the user computer and any internet site servers in order to monitor the internet usage of the user.

41. The network of claim 40 wherein the connection means is an internet browser.

42. An apparatus for measuring usage of internet resources, comprising:
a proxy server in communicable relation with a user browser, the communicable relation effected via a proxy setting of the browser, such that the user browser is capable of accessing at least one internet resource via the proxy server, and the proxy server is capable of initiating usage measurement of the resource accessed.

43. The apparatus of claim 42 further comprising a measurement code that is inserted into an accessed resource by the proxy server prior to the resource being

forwarded to the user browser for measurement of the usage of that resource on the user browser.

44. The apparatus according to claim 42 or 43 wherein measurement data including user identification data is passed from the user's browser to a data collection and processing means

45. A method of measuring usage of internet resources comprising the steps of:
enabling a user's browser proxy setting to reference the location of a proxy server;
receiving an internet resource request at the proxy server from the user's browser;
forwarding the resource request to a resource server to obtain the requested resource;

receiving the requested resource at the proxy server from the resource server;
passing the requested resource to the user's browser after the insertion of a measurement code to monitor the usage of the requested resource.

46. The method of claim 45 further comprising the step of identifying the user at the data collection and processing means via an identification means sent with the measurement data.

47. The method of claim 46 wherein the identification means is a cookie.

48. The method of claim 49 wherein the measurement means is embedded code in an HTML page.

49. A system for measuring and analysing multiple data sources over a communications network in order to ascertain information about the use of one or more resources linked to said communications network, said system comprising:
a plurality of resource servers;

an insertion server linking each resource server of said plurality of resource servers to said communications network;

such that when a request for a monitored resource from any one of said resource servers is made, measurement code is inserted into said requested monitored resource by said insertion server for the purposes of measuring and analysing usage of the monitored resource.